

Chapter 4 *Nutrition Education*

Module 2: Creating Healthy Eating Actions

Step Up and Step Out to increase opportunities for healthy eating choices in your community!

Now is the time to create action-leading opportunities for healthy eating and nutrition education. If restaurant operators, concession stand managers, teachers, administrators, and school meal staff were not a part of original discussions it would be good to get their input and begin partnerships before planning actions.

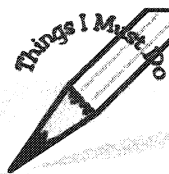


Considerations for taking actions



- ♥ Small changes work best. Even the smallest changes can make a difference!
- ♥ Involve as many people as possible.
- ♥ Although the coalition will be looking at the environment in the community and school to create opportunities for healthy eating choices, it is helpful to keep in mind how community members can take steps to make personal change. Personal change translates into modeling opportunities!

Helpful information for healthy eating actions



1. Involve key players

Teachers and school administrators play key roles in school education.

Dietitians, physicians, home extension agents, and other professionals will be instrumental in community education efforts.

Planning for Environmental Changes:

1. Involve key players
2. Use information from the community review, listening sessions and VMSOA planning.
3. Build on what exists.
4. Plan actions using environmental change methods
5. Plan ways to measure success
6. Take actions
7. Review results

2. Use information from the community review, listening sessions and VMSEA planning

Here are a few examples from the community review:

- ♥ Is the community providing good role models for healthy eating choices?
- ♥ Are healthy eating choices a habit at home, in the school, and in the community?
- ♥ What opportunities for healthy eating choices currently exist in your community?
 - ☐ Restaurants promote healthy choices?
 - ☐ Concessions include healthy options?
 - ☐ Dinners at places of faith highlight healthy recipes?
 - ☐ Girl/Boy Scouts invite guest speakers and include healthy eating projects?
 - ☐ Latch Key programs teach and model skills for making healthy snacks?
 - ☐ Senior citizen activity centers invite children to share a "Healthy Snack Day"
- ♥ Are there existing opportunities that are not used to their full potential? For example, could blood pressure checks at the fire station include information on healthy eating?
- ♥ What problems keep opportunities from being optimized? Is there a lack of awareness, resources, time, or communication problems?
- ♥ Which resources are needed for creating change? Are volunteers needed, are facilities adequate?
- ♥ What support is being provided to sustain benefits? Are efforts to increase healthy opportunities recognized? Are businesses supported with increased use of their services and products?

3. Build on what exists



Begin with easy to implement and low cost actions. Be flexible.

4. Plan actions using the environmental change methods

The methods are discussed in Chapter 2 *Action Planning* Module 5: Action Planning Tools to create plans for change:

- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------|
| ♥ Policy | ♥ Repetition | ♥ Support |
| ♥ Collaboration | ♥ Education | ♥ Reward |

5. Plan for ways to measure success

Tips for measuring success are given in Module 5 of this Chapter.

6. Take actions



Planning is very important, but groups can get bogged down and people lose interest if actions are not taken early. The only way to be sure something will work is to try it!

7. Review results

The **Environmental Change Plan** is very helpful. The planning steps can be reviewed and comments for revision noted. It provides an excellent communication tool.



Change methods for the environmental action plan

Applying all six environmental change methods to actions for creating healthy eating choices creates the best potential for sustaining changes.

“Policy” method of environmental change



Policies create a required environmental change and are very valuable for sustaining changes.

A school policy that requires a school health curriculum and sets guidelines takes the guesswork out of whether actions will be initiated. Tying the curriculum to national or state education standards helps to ensure its success!

Written policies are formal, required “rules” or guidelines. On the “down side” if written policies don’t work out as expected, they are sometimes difficult to change. Planning a “trial” period before formalizing a policy is one way to work out the bugs before they become “set in stone.”

Sometimes a “tradition” becomes an *informal, unwritten policy* that becomes difficult to change. Is there a practice that has “been that way forever” and now is just accepted as “the way it is done?” These are the practices that are “unwritten policies” and also have a significant impact on choices.

Examples:



Example 1: If your place of faith has an “unwritten” policy (tradition) to serve donuts and coffee between services, could fruit be added for those who would like to choose a healthy option?

Example 2: If the local Boy Scout troop has an “unwritten” policy to have chips and soft drinks at every meeting, could fruit juice and pretzels be offered as an option?

Example 3: Has the case been made to turn off all soft drink machines during the school day? If not, could a policy be considered? Could there be a policy to include equal numbers of milk and juice machines?

Ideas for motivating policy makers to make change

- ♥ Create awareness of health benefits
- ♥ Demonstrate public support
- ♥ Anticipate potential problems and offer solutions

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued guidelines for school health programs (1) that emphasize the need for school-based nutrition education and suggest techniques school policy leaders can use to assess their school’s specific needs. These guidelines along with the CDC *School Health Index* will help school board and community members identify and understand the issues that need to be addressed to support development of a quality initiative.

“Collaboration” method of environmental change

The potential for change is great when partners work together to share responsibilities, resources, and rewards!



The key is identifying win/win solutions. Business wins when sales are increased or employee morale/attendance increases. Parents win when their

children are happy, healthy, and learning is improved. The community wins when quality of life improves and attracts more business.

Examples:



Example 1: Can win/win solutions be created? A restaurant can gain media attention and additional customers by creating healthy menu options. The customers win with healthy food choices.

Example 2: A supermarket can gain parents as customers for a supermarket tour if they arrange with the local library to set-up a “healthy eating story hour” in the store to occupy children. The children gain knowledge and have fun. The library gains through public service and increased exposure to books.

Example 3: Is it possible to collaborate with the high school for students to help teachers with classroom tasting parties as a part of their community service hours? High school students provide excellent role models, and can learn while helping.

“Repetition” method of environmental change

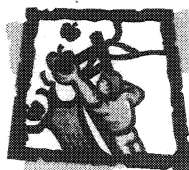
Giving up too soon is a common mistake when creating environmental change. Sometimes it takes a while for something to “catch on.” Other times, repeating something gives the coalition an opportunity to identify areas for improvement. With a little revision, a “disappointment” might become a success.

Examples:



Example 1: A newspaper’s contest for healthy food recipes might have a small number of entries the first year but grow in the following years through recognition and word of mouth.

Example 2: A senior citizen potluck dinner may have little response the first month to a flyer for participants to bring healthy food choices. But it may grow each month thereafter, with recognition and discussions about who has the tastiest, healthy recipes!



“Education” method of environmental change

Education is important to create awareness or increase knowledge and skills to make healthy eating choices. Providing children the knowledge and tools about how to make healthy choices will do more to create healthy habits than focusing on everything there is to know about a single nutrient!



Examples:



Example 1: “All foods can fit in a healthy diet” education may help win support for a school-wide policy to include healthy eating options for school parties. Including healthy options provides education opportunities for students and models a good environment.

Example 2: Fast food education for making healthy choices can benefit customers, and may create enough interest from restaurants that they would take steps to advertise healthy meal packages.

“Support” method of environmental change

Arranging the environment to make change easier is a key manner of support. For example, parents support change when they provide healthy options at home and model healthy choices for their children. The coalition can provide support by finding resources, or with recognition for efforts.

It will be easier to integrate a nutrition education curriculum if the principal provides encouragement and resources such as time and materials. Support from the school board is also important to create policies, programs, and provide recognition.

Examples:



Example 1: A principal who understands the importance of taste testing in the classroom is more likely to create an environment that makes it easier for the teacher to obtain food items.

Example 2: A city administrator who supports actions of the coalition may be instrumental in creating policies that allow for healthy eating choices at city ballparks and swimming facilities.

Example 3: The coalition shows support for restaurants that add healthy food choices to their menus when members frequent the establishments.



"Reward" method of environmental change

We all like to be rewarded for the changes we make. Reward keeps us motivated. Reward can be in the form of recognition, a "prize" for something well done, or self-motivation. Remember the power of self-reward results from things that don't cost money, like fun, challenge, curiosity, or a feeling of achievement!

Examples:



Example 1: Restaurants that offer healthy choices can be rewarded with a framed "healthy choice blue ribbon award" that can be displayed.

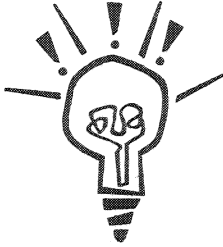
Example 2: Senior citizens bringing healthy menu items to a potluck can be rewarded with recognition by publishing a copy of random recipes in the monthly newsletter.

Example 3: A personal log of healthy eating habits and changes shows progress and is motivating.



References and Resources

- (1) The CDC Guidelines for School Health Programs to Promote Lifelong Healthy Eating, MMWR 45(RR-9): 1-33, 6/14/96.
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/nutguide.htm Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1600 Clifton Road, Atlanta, GA 30333; phone 1-800-311-3435; (770) 488-3168. www.cdc.gov



Module Tip:

People working together in communities increase opportunities for healthy eating choices. There is no change too small, or opportunity too insignificant to model healthy choices.

FAQs:

- ❑ **Question:** Local change with fast food restaurants is difficult because of franchise requirements. Is it worth the effort to try to increase opportunities for healthy choices?

Answer: Who knows what partnerships at a local level may lead to on a national level! You don't know until you try. If there are enough voices in enough communities, they may be heard on a national level.

- ❑ **Question:** Isn't it necessary to make sure people are aware of all of the benefits of healthy choices before making changes in the community?

Answer: There are so many things that cause unhealthy choices. Creating opportunities for healthy choice is just as important as providing "education."

Module Glossary:

Informal, unwritten policy: Tradition...the way things have always been done.

Example:



Environmental Change Plan

Healthy Eating Objective: By 2005, the coalition will have one event that involves retail business to increase awareness of healthy eating and physical activity for all community members.

Environmental change methods planned. Check all that apply.	Actions and resources needed to implement the plan	Problems to resolve	Who takes action, and by what date?	Review— results of actions Check all that apply.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration <input type="checkbox"/> Repetition <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reward -Of- problems resolved: <input type="checkbox"/> Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Time <input type="checkbox"/> Location <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<p>Action: <i>Plan an event with retailers at the "mall" by December '05.</i></p> <p>Marketing Plan: <i>Telephone and personal contacts to retailers and mall representatives</i></p> <p>Resources: <i>Stamps, stationary</i></p>		<p><i>Susan makes contacts by 2/05</i></p>	<p>Communication:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Great marketing <input type="checkbox"/> Need M-and-M's <p>Time:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Good timing <input type="checkbox"/> Needs work <p>Location:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs work <p>Resources</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Feasible cost <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs work <p>Participation:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs work <p>Overall:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Great-continue <input type="checkbox"/> Good-revise <input type="checkbox"/> Fair-revise
	<p>Action: <i>Plan activities by 8/05</i></p> <p>Marketing Plan: <i>not needed</i></p> <p>Resources: <i>5-4-Day ideas, supplies</i></p>		<p><i>Jeff, Brenda, and Karma work with mall representatives to plan activities by 8/05</i></p>	
	<p>Action: <i>Find volunteers to staff activities</i></p> <p>Marketing Plan: <i>Mall announcements, TV/ radio announcements</i></p> <p>Resources: <i>Volunteer to write announcements and make contacts to implement them</i></p>		<p><i>Tim, Don, and Shari find volunteers by 9/05</i></p>	

Example



Event Planning Tool

Use this example to create awareness and participation!

Title Of Program/Project/Event: "And The Winner Is..."

☐ Media ☒ School ☐ Business ☒ Community

Target Audience:

☒ Students 580 ☐ Parents 55 ☒ Teachers 30 ☐ School meal director and staff ____
☒ School administrators ____ ☒ Business/community leaders/community-at-large ____

Outline/Description/Objectives/Ideas:

Objective: Create awareness and participation in making healthy eating choices.

Description:

1. Use real fruits/vegetables, models, giant pillow replicas, posters, etc. to create a 5 A Day display.
2. Provide a voting booth and ballot where participants can vote for their favorite fruit and vegetable.
3. Have new and less frequently eaten fruits and vegetables available for tasting.
4. Have recipe ideas available for fruits and vegetables.

Marketing Plan: Involve the media (TV, radio, newspaper) in "announcing" the favorite fruit and vegetable, and possibly the runner-up. This can be a feature about the project, 5 A Day, etc., and can quote local celebrities at the voting booth and their comments about the "candidates"...Mr. Ripe Tomato, Wally Watermelon, etc., etc...A chance to have fun and educate students and the public about fruits and vegetables.

Resource Materials/Supplies/Food/Handouts:

Fruits and vegetables for tasting, recipes, models, or foods for 5 A Day display

Costs/Funding Source:

Food costs, copies

Manpower Needed:

1-2

Space/Time/Date Requirements:

Two 6-8 foot tables

Prep Time:

1-2 hours

Alternate Plan:

Comments: Could be done at school to "vote" for school meal favorites and incorporated in the menu, or in the community. An option at school would be to integrate the activity with a classroom lesson on elections and voting.